

About the Authors

Public Utility Commission of Texas

The Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) is the agency that regulates electric and telecommunication services for the state. The PUC is also a source of assistance and information for consumers. The PUC administers Relay Texas, a telecommunications relay service that provides telephone voicing services to persons with hearing and speech-related disabilities. The PUC, along with the Division for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, provides financial assistance to qualified individuals with disabilities so that they may obtain the equipment they need to communicate over the telephone. For more information on the PUC, visit www.puc.state.tx.us.

Relay Texas

Relay Texas provides telephone services through specially trained Communication Assistants for persons who have hearing or speech-related disabilities.

Several options are available that enable persons who are deaf or hard of hearing to place and receive calls. These include Voice Carry-Over to TTY, Voice Carry-Over to Voice Carry-Over, Hearing Carry-Over to TTY, and Hearing Carry-Over to Hearing Carry-Over.

Speech to Speech is the free telephone re-voicing service that allows persons with speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls. Speech to Speech is a feature of Relay Texas. Persons with speech disabilities or persons wishing to contact someone with a speech disability can call and connect with a trained Communication Assistant (CA) who re-voices the words that are spoken by the individual with a speech disability.

Speak Up Texas! is an outreach program of the PUC that is dedicated to helping Texans with speech-related disabilities communicate more effectively using the telephone. It was created in 2002 to increase use of Speech to Speech.

Texas law mandates and assures confidentiality of the telephone calls placed between Relay Texas users and operators. The telephone interpreting service is free and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Relay Texas is a PUC service. For more information about Relay Texas call types and features, visit www.puc.state.tx.us/relay/texasrelay/features.cfm.

Technology and Inclusion

Technology and Inclusion (TAI) is a non-profit organization based in Austin, Texas. Founded in 1994, Technology and Inclusion specializes in using assistive technology to develop solutions for children, youth and adults with disabilities and their families. TAI provides a wide range of specialized services for individuals with disabilities and their families and the professionals who serve them. TAI is the home of the Texas Technology Resource Center, an assistive technology preview center. In addition to work on Speak Up Texas!, TAI is involved with programs such as the Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP), Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) and Tech Tots. For more information on Technology and Inclusion, visit www.taicenter.com.